

**INJECTING
QUALITY
INTO
OUR UNIVERSITY**



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CHAPTER 5

POSITIONING THE LIBRARY FOR QUALITY DELIVERY

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ABSTRACT

Many Nigerian University Libraries are still grappling with the challenges of acquiring up-to-date collection and facilities to provide quality services to meet the needs of their users. Given this situation, this paper set out to discuss quality assurance standards available in literature and to assess University of Uyo Library against these measurement indicators for quality services delivery. Standards adopted included performance indicators, input and output measure indicators which the National Universities Commission (NUC) has asked all University Libraries to adapt for use in the improvement of quality service delivery in the Nigerian University system, in the context of contemporary developments. The findings show that even though the University Library is positioned for quality delivery of Library services to the University community the actual service output is low and therefore recommends that it be raised to internationally accepted standards for it to be utilized effectively.

INTRODUCTION

A University Library is established to provide information services to enable the institution achieve excellence in performance of its research, teaching and community services functions. Until a vibrant university library is provided, the laudable objectives of a university cannot be met because the intellectual vitality and effectiveness of any university depends largely on the state of its library (Aguolu, 2002). It is pertinent therefore to note that the relevance of an efficient library service in a University cannot be overemphasized. Many Nigerian University Libraries, however, are still grappling with the challenges of

acquiring up to date collections and facilities to provide quality services to meet the needs of their users. Traditional functions in University libraries have given way to electronic computer applications for such routine functions as selection ordering, acquisitions, lending and document delivery through the development of online databases, digitization and virtualization of the library resources. The National Universities Commission (NUC) through its National Virtual Library Project and securing access to the online EBSCO Host database on behalf of the Nigerian University system has sought to improve the quality of services in the Nigerian university library system. This discourse examines library quality delivery and the positioning of the University of Uyo Library for quality delivery in the context of contemporary developments.

Conceptual Considerations

Quality has been defined differently by different scholars. To some, quality is seen as a *degree of excellence* while others see quality as *level of value in a product*. Middlehurst (1992) perceives quality as a *grade of achievement*, a standard against which to judge others. The Chambers Super Mini Dictionary defines quality as a *degree of worth and assurance* or that which denotes a *feeling of certainty or confidence*. According to UNESCO, quality in higher education is multidimensional and embraces all functions and activities of a university including teaching, academic programmes, research, staffing, the library, building facilities, equipments and services to the community.

Library quality delivery therefore is an all-embracing term referring to a continuous process of the provision of standard, valuable information service. It is a planned and systematic mechanism to ensure that previously specified requirements are met and that responsibility for quality and standards are properly discharged. As a regulatory mechanism, quality delivery focuses on both accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments through an agreed and consistent process, which utilizes well-established criteria.

Quality delivery depends on the existence of the necessary institutional mechanisms preferably sustained by a solid culture of quality. Quality management, enhancement, control and assessment are means by which quality delivery is achieved. The nature and scope of quality delivery is determined by the prevalent health, shape and size of the institution.

QUALITY DELIVERY IN LIBRARIES

Standards for Quality Delivery in Libraries

Quality Delivery in the Nigerian University libraries cannot be discussed in isolation of the issues of standards. Once the standards are ascertained, it becomes easy to track and measure the quality of our University Libraries. The two main indicators (i.e. currency and adequacy of resources) used to assess university libraries during NUC accreditation are not exhaustive. The need therefore arises for us to examine some standards used elsewhere for possible adoption of the relevant ones in the Nigerian University library system. The International Standards Organization (ISO) had developed quality system standards recognized in over 900 countries - ISO 9001 and ISO 9002. Both instruments set out requirements to be met by the quality system. Different library and information science communities are also engaged in developing the quality delivery system. One of them is the Standard Conference of University Libraries (SCUNUL). It brought about the setting of a special section for implementing ISO 9000 standards in University Libraries. It became clear that every library has to set priority tasks for itself since it cannot meet all the requirements of its clientele. It is therefore self evident that Nigerian University libraries need Quality Assurance Systems to optimize their services delivery. Quality Delivery issues at stake are; -

- An increasing demand for accountability.
- A competitive education market
- Developments in online education
- A growing volume of accessible information.
- Improving efficiency and effectiveness
- Improving customer satisfaction
- Balancing the competing needs of a diverse client group. Diploma, Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and Faculty.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) standards for libraries in Higher Education (2004) provides quantitative and qualitative approaches to assessing the effectiveness of a library and its librarians. The ACRL provides statements of good library practice and advocates use of input, output, and outcome measures to assess performance of the library in the context of the institution's mission statements as follows:

Inputs: are generally regarded as the raw materials of a library programme the money, space, collection, equipment and staff.

Outputs serve to quantify the work done i.e. number of books processed and circulated, Number of reference tools constructed or reference questions answered etc.

Outcomes are the ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library's resources, and programmes.

Performance Indicators for Quality Library Service

The basic objectives of the Library Quality Delivery framework should include the following:

- To enable the library to assure itself, its stakeholders and the University that its policies, systems and processes for the development, maintenance and enhancement of quality in all its educational offerings are functioning effectively.
- To enable the library and the University to identify areas of strength and excellence as well as areas in need of focused attention for improvement in the short, medium and long term and.
- To enable the University to evaluate the overall status of quality management of its libraries.

Each University Library is expected to provide quantitative and qualitative parameters as measures of assessing quality delivery. Once the baseline survey has been conducted, then the standards of measurement have been set.

Input Measure Indicators

- Ratio of book volumes to combined total student and faculty FTE.
- Ratio of materials/information resource expenditure to combined total student and faculty FTE.
- Ratio of library staff to combined student and faculty FTE.
- Ratio of usable library space to combined student and faculty FTE.
- Ratio of students attending library instructional sessions to total enrolment.
- Ratio of computer workstations to combined student and faculty FTE.

Output Measure Indicators

- Ratio of book circulation to combined student and faculty FTE.
- Ratio of loan requests to combined students and faculty FTE.
- Ratio of reference questions answered to combined student and faculty FTE.
- Ratio of books processed to number of library staff.

Outcomes Measure Indicators

- Ratio of number of students acquiring information handling and retrieval skills.
- Ratio of programmes attaining pass marks at accreditation in library resources.
- Ratio of number of library users obtaining good reading habits and attitudes.

UNIUYO LIBRARY FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY DELIVERY

Implementation Guidelines (Ikpaahindi 2006)

- Alignment with the University's strategic direction.
- Integration with the University's structural systems and financial planning.
- Physical Infrastructure to support teaching, learning, teaching and research.
- Information Resources and Services to support learning, teaching and research.
- Participation with external professional bodies.

Alignment with the University's Strategic Direction

The University of Uyo has documented mission and vision statements, which involve graded successive goals to be attained. The mission of the University of Uyo states:

"The University of Uyo shall be a centre of excellence in teaching, learning and research through the development deployment and retention of sound scholarship. The rich cultural heritage of Nigeria shall be promoted. The economic growth of the country shall be sustained through active development in science and technology with sensitivity and response to global environmental changes".

The vision statement, a long distant ultimate target to be achieved through successive implementation of goals is:

"As a centre of academic excellence, the University of Uyo shall strive towards sustainable and technological development through the utilization of the vast natural resources available within its environs in teaching, research, community service and problem solving venture without prejudice to maintaining a friendly environment".

To align with the University's strategic direction, the University library has put forward mission and vision statements to support those developed by the parent institution. The University library mission statement is

"To provide relevant and appropriate information resources to the University Community through resources acquisition, resources sharing and online access to the world wide web for the sustenance of academic excellence and technological development".

The vision has been set as:

"As a User friendly library and information centre, the University of Uyo library shall strive toward on accessible and affordable access to information globally through an assertive and proactive information outreach to the University Community"

The strategies for achieving the put forward mission and vision are:

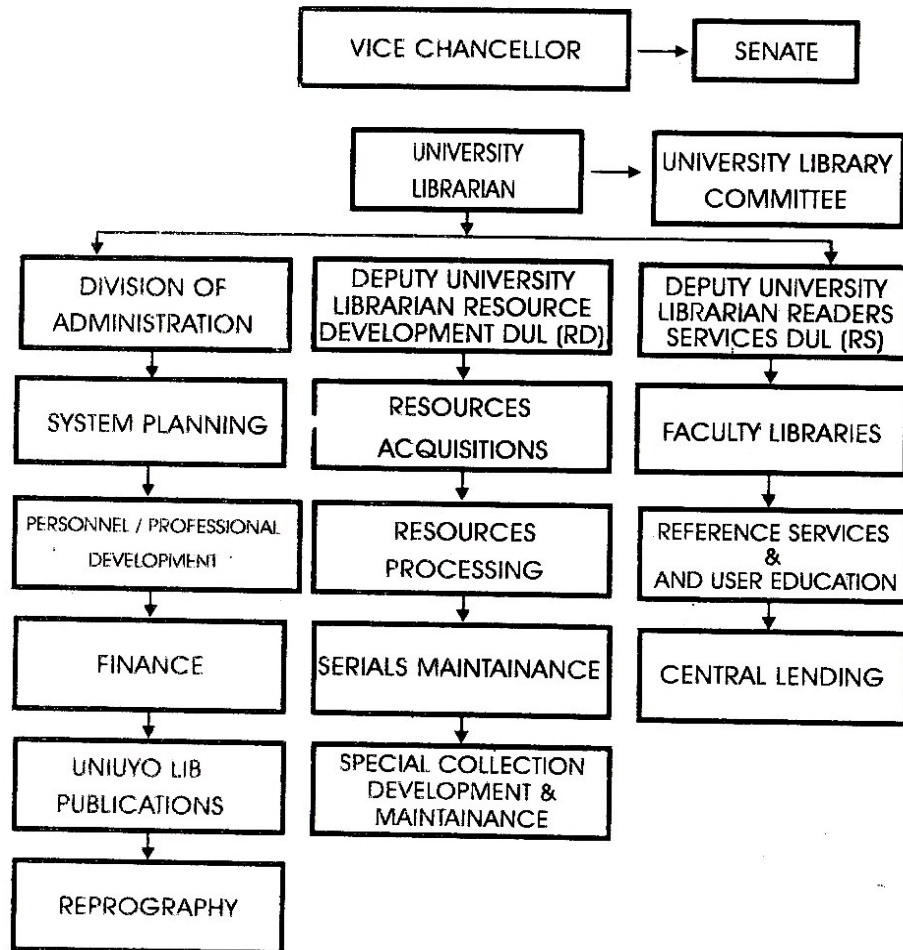
1. Match/Identify library goals with department/faculty needs through faculty representation in the University library committee.
2. Match/Identify faculty profile with accessible library resources for purpose of a selective dissemination of information (SDI) using analysed personal profile forms
3. Increased and proportionate book acquisition and journal subscription in line with the library acquisition policy.
4. V/SAT installation and increased workstations for Internet access scheduled for ETF intervention 2005.
5. Computerization of present holdings, which has been mapped out for ETF intervention 2006.

5. Production of UniUyo Database consisting of Theses, Dissertations and faculty publications as input UniUyo Website.
6. Ensuring that the right staffs are placed in the right duty posts for efficiency.
7. Ethical reorientation of students and faculty towards improved readership and information handling using the Readership Promotion on Campus initiative. (RPC)
8. Mounting monthly staff seminars for library professionals to generate debate on issues and research to encourage staff – peer review.
9. Mounting of structured credit earning course for student on information Handling Reading Habits and Literature search strategies for inculcation of permanent lifelong skills.

Integration with University's Structures, Systems and Financial Planning

The Library is involved in the University decision-making and budgetary processes as evidenced the Organogram in figure 1. The organizational structure enhances the potential for the fulfillment of the library's stated mission, goals and objectives. Effective communication channels, lines of authority and accountability frameworks are put in place.

FIGURE 1
ORGANOGRAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO LIBRARY



Physical Infrastructure to Support Teaching, Learning and Research

The library should have suitable space with adequate sitting for at least 25% of registered users. The University library is found wanting in this area. With the operation of a multi-library system at five locations at Town Campus; Annex Campus, College of Medicine and the Main Campus. In all, the reading facilities are poor; readers' sitting space can only cater for about 1000 as against 5,000 judging from about 20,000-student enrolment. It is expected that the completion and furnishing of the central library at the main campus would alleviate these problems.

Information Resources and Services

Inspite of limitations in physical space and infrastructure, the University library has very useful resources for study and research. Figure 2 shows a list of some of the programs and their website.

FIGURE 2

S/N	Programme	Website
1.	Journal Storage (Stor): The Scholarly Journal Archive	Http://www.jstor.org/about/aica/Africa
2.	Elfi.net (Electronic Information for Libraries).	http://www.elfinet .
3.	Bio One	http://www.bioone.org/perserv/?request .
4.	Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford Reference Online)	http://www.elfi.net.org .
5.	e Granary	http://www.Widernet.org/digitallibrary
6.	INASP-International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications.	Http://www.Inasp.info/peri/free.shtml
7.	African Journals Online (Ajo: A programme of WASP)	www.Ajol.org
8.	AGORA: Access to global online research in Agriculture.	Agora @ FAO.Org .
9.	Hinari: Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative	http://www.healthinternetwork.net/ .
10.	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC Journals)	www.rsc.org/publishing/Journals/
11.	OpenDOAR: Directory of open access Journals.	www.opendoar.org
12.	e-Math for Africa	http://www.math.golonka.sc/
13.	National Virtual Library of Nigeria	www.NationalVirtualLibrary.com
14.	African Digital Library	www.africandl.org.za
15.	TEEAL: The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library	http://www.teeal.org/
16.	Africa South of the Sahara Library	http://www.sui.stanford.edu/depts/africa/guide.html
17.	IPL: The Internet public library	http://www.ipl.org/reading/books/index.html
18.	Project Gutenberg (Literature re-published)	Http://promo.net/pg/
19.	Google	www.Google.com
20.	EBSCO Host Online Access	www.ebsco.com http://ejournal.ebsco.com/

The University Library should have adequate and appropriately trained staff able to support the library's mission, goals and objectives. In the University of Uyo, policies, procedures and operational guide lines related to conditions of employment are available to all staff members. All procedures and appointments are in line with relevant legislation and the overall policies of the University. Criteria for appointment and promotion are explicit and consistently applied. The University provides opportunity to enhance capabilities of staff for professional growth. Although the ratio of library staff to combined student and faculty is not quite proportional, management is positioned to redress the imbalances.

Cadre of staff	Number	Percentage %
Professional Librarian	10	7%
Para-Professional (Lib. Officers)	17	13%
Library Asst./Bindery Assistant	94	68%
Admin/Technical Staff	3	2%
Support Staff	14	10
	138	100%

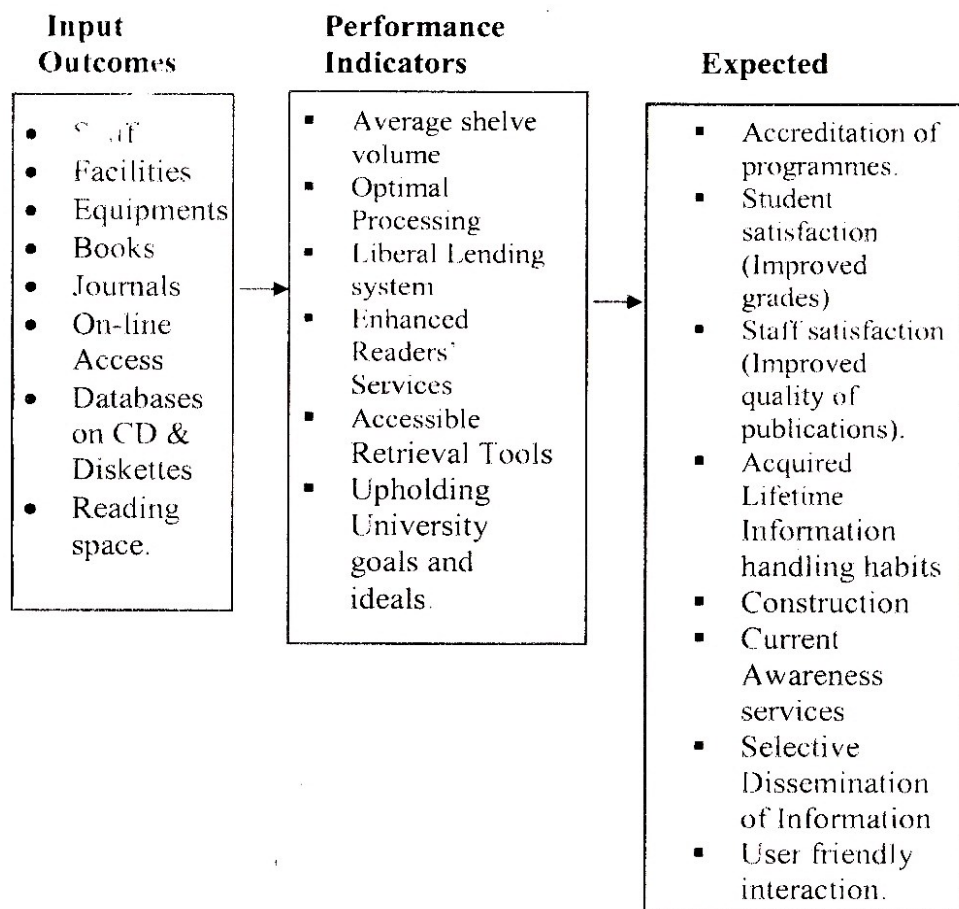
CULNU Guidelines on standards for University Libraries 2000/2001 session.

- (a) Professional to non-professional 1:3
- (b) Total Library staff to enrolment 1:50
- (c) Professional Staff to enrolment 1:200

External Partnerships

University libraries should be active in the external professional field of library and information science and contribute to the development of the profession in the society. Over fifty percent of the para and professional librarians in the University of Uyo are members of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA). A few are also members of the West Africa Library Association (WALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). There are three chartered librarians (CLN) on the staff of the University Library.

Model of quality library service delivery in University of Uyo



From the foregoing discourse, it may be fair to deduce that the University of Uyo is positioned for quality service delivery, despite the challenges posed by inadequate and lean funding. It is pertinent to mention that the present University administration has taken bold steps to ensure the delivery of relevant and quality information service to the University Community.

CONCLUSION

The library plays a key role in delivering learning resources to students and staff of the University. The quality of services provided by the library therefore directly affects the quality of the academic programmes of the University and their products. It is for this reason that the paper has attempted to highlight the issues at stake, quality delivery of library services to the University community, raised internationally accepted standards and indicators for measurement of quality library practice and services. It ventured to apply the quality assurance framework to the University of Uyo library environment. It is the opinion of this paper that barring extraneous and intervening variables, the University of Uyo library is positioned for quality service delivery to the University Community.

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